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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [OSCE](#) [GR](#)
SUBJECT: GREEK MP LIKELY CANDIDATE FOR OSCE COMMISSIONER ON
NATIONAL MINORITIES

REF: COUNTRYMAN-SCOTT E-MAILS

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CHARLES RIES. REASON: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) On January 23, Greek MP Nikos Georgiadis told DCM that he had received approval from Greek FM Bakoyiannis to present himself as a candidate for the job of OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities. Georgiadis is scheduled to meet with OSCE Secretary General de Brichambault (who will be critical to the selection of the new Commissioner) during de Brichambault's visit to Athens on January 29.

¶2. (U) Born in 1964, Georgiadis holds a law degree from the University of Athens, as well as a BA in Economics and Sociology from the American College of Greece. He earned an M.Phil in Development Economics from the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex in 1990. After working at the EU Commission in Brussels, he worked as a business consultant (Ernst and Young) and in that role traveled to and worked with clients in nearly all of the former Soviet republics. Georgiadis was recruited by Karamanlis as a candidate of the center-right governing New Democracy party in the 2004 elections and was elected to the Parliament from the island of Corfu. He is fluent in Greek, English and French, with a passable knowledge of Spanish and German and minor familiarity with Russian. On the side, he was one of Greece's top ten tennis players in his youth and still occasionally sings and records with his jazz band.

¶3. (C) COMMENT: Georgiadis is one of the brightest people in the Greek Parliament (the Vouli). We conclude this because it took him barely a year to realize that being a junior MP was a waste of time for someone with energy and a desire to make a difference. He told DCM in the spring of 2006 that neither the Prime Minister nor the Vouli President were interested in having new members show any initiative in crafting legislation. Georgiadis found it stultifying, but was unable simply to resign, because this would create a perception of a split within the ND, when in fact he is loyal to Karamanlis. Moving to an international position of status equal or higher than an MP would both give him a meaningful job and avoid that political loss for ND.

¶4. (C) In our view, Georgiadis would make a good candidate for the job, despite his relative youth. He and Bakoyiannis are fully aware that a Greek candidate for the position would face automatic suspicion from its neighbors. (Indeed, the very title of the position clashes with the official Greek line that there are no "national minorities" in Greece, only a "Muslim minority.") Fortunately for Georgiadis, he is not a typical Greek politician. He has cultivated extraordinarily close ties with politicians in Skopje, Tirana and (especially) Ankara beginning from his days as a leader of the youth wing of the ND. In 2006, he was the first MP to argue in print that Greece should simply recognize its northern neighbor as "Republic of Macedonia." Although he was virulently attacked for it, he also received thousands of

messages from ordinary Greeks supporting his view.

15. (C) Between his outspokenness and his political contacts in Greece's neighbors and in Central Asia, we are not willing to bet against Georgiadis' chances of neutralizing the knee-jerk opposition and convincing de Brichambault to select him. Georgiadis was told by the MFA that, in mid-December (after he had decided to pursue the position but before he had the Foreign Minister's blessing), the current High Commissioner Rolf Ekeus approached the Greek Permrep in Vienna to suggest that Greece should offer a candidate for the position. If Georgiadis actually got the job, it could only help us in our persistent, low-key efforts to get Greece to modernize its own approach to national minorities. END COMMENT.
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